Grow
Early Education

Choking Prevention Guide

High-Risk Food Characteristics

There are characteristics that make foods more likely for babies and children to choke on them. These food characteristics are:

Small

Round

Hard

Slippery

Challenging to Chew

Size of an Airway

Small and Slippery - means the food is more likely to enter and block the airway

Round and Hard - means the food is more likely to cause a complete blockage of the airway

The more small, round, hard, slippery, or challenging a food is, the greater the risk of choking it poses. They are more likely to enter and get lodged in the airway.
It is important to also note that your little one can choke on anything, including liquid.

An example of food that fits all of the small, round, hard and slippery criteria is a grape or a cherry tomato.

How Small is a Child's Airway?

1-6 Months	6-18 Months	18 Months - 3 Years	3 Years +
5-6mm diameter	*6-7mm diameter*	*7-8 mm diameter*	*8-9mm diameter*

Source: tinyhearts.com

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Marshmallows
Your average marshmallow's size is very similar to that of a little one's [aged 0-3] airway. When mixed with saliva they become sticky - which can be hard for children to swallow and can prevent choking treatment from being effective.

Chewing Gum, Lollipops & Gum Balls

Circular Shaped Foods
Unchopped sausages + hotdogs or chopped into coin-like shapes can easily block an airway. Instead, chop in long, thin slices.

Grapes & Cherry Tomatoes
These are the perfect size to block an airway. Chop them into quarters longways or in half for older kids.

Nuts
Did you know that little ones can choke on even half a nut? Instead, grind them down or use a thin spread of nut paste like peanut butter. Avoid whole nuts until at least 5.

Oranges or Citrus with Membranes

Chunks of Meat
Cook, freeze, and grate into small pieces or chop well.

Large Blueberries
Halve or quarter for extra-large ones.

Watermelon
Chop into long, thin slices.

Hard, Raw Fruit & Vegetables
Peel + grate, steam, blend or chop well.

Ice

Rice Cakes

Peas

Fish with Bones

String Cheese, Cheese Sticks or cubed cheese

Raisins, Sultanas & Currants

Popcorn
Popcorn is a big choking risk, but also poses a risk for aspiration [being breathed into the lungs].

Tiny Teddies

Canned Fruit

Make These Foods Safer

Hard, Raw, Fruit or Vegetables - *Cook or Grate*

Grapes & Cherry Tomatoes - *Cut Into Quarters, Lengthways*

Sausages & Hot Dogs - *Cut Into Long Thin Slices*

Whole Nuts - *Grind or Use a Thin Spread of Paste on Bread*

Source: tinyhearts.com